

# Socialist Worker

No. 3 3 April 1995

For Workers Power and International Socialism

\$1

## inside

### IT'S TIME FOR WORKERS TO FIGHT BACK

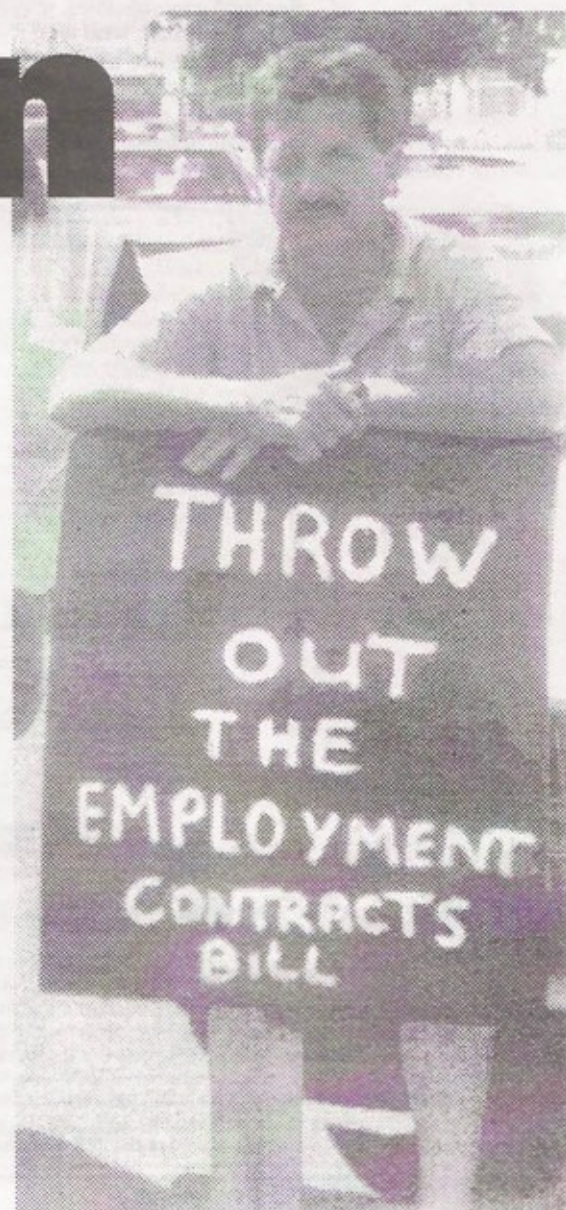
How we can rebuild the  
unions and beat the  
bosses – pages 8 & 9

Reserve  
Bank  
throttles  
workers  
– page 5

## Workers strike for more wages, Maori reclaim marae at Moutoa

**It's the same class – we, the poor and exploited – fighting the  
same struggle against the same enemy – fat cats of all races**

# Brown and white must unite!





# Two corporate politicians shake hands for NZ media

by GRANT MORGAN

AT CONSIDERABLE expense to Kiwi taxpayers, Jim Bolger went to Washington and shook the hand of US president Bill Clinton in a blaze of publicity from the New Zealand media machine.

The media billed it as the end of the 10 year chill imposed by America to punish us for our nuclear free policy.

Bolger promised that New Zealand would remain a loyal and devoted ally of America.

But not everyone is convinced that we're now in an era of love and comradeship with the White House.

In the language of the street, one New Zealand worker said "Bolger licked Clinton's boots".

One practical issue that Bolger raised with Clinton was an appeal to stop the dumping of subsidised American dairy products on New Zealand markets in Asia.

## Subsidies

American agriculture is overwhelmingly dominated by corporate farmers who get almost all the US government's \$US12 billion in farm subsidies. Dan Glickman, who is Clinton's choice as agriculture secretary, advocates the aggressive use of farm subsidies to push competitors aside.

Bolger had to admit he didn't win any concessions on the farm subsidy issue beyond an "assurance" that the United States would do what it could to minimise the damage to "non-subsidised exporters like New Zealand".

This "assurance" is just the diplomatic equivalent of saying - "get stuffed!"

Despite all its rhetoric about "free trade", the US government is prepared to brush aside its "allies" like New Zealand and intervene in world markets to protect the profits of the corporate elite who run America.

But let's not just criticise the White House for playing power politics. What excuse has Bolger got for refusing

to defend the East Timorese who are still resisting Indonesian forces 20 years after the US-sponsored invasion of their homeland?

**Bolger's silence marks him out as an accomplice of the American corporate elite and their Indonesian allies in this act of genocide which has killed one-third of the East Timorese people.**

Behind all the media hype and stagey smiles, two corporate politicians shook each other's hands in the White House. It's just that one governs the mightiest country on earth and tells the other when to jump.

## Bolger's Decent Society



The government has set a huge profit target for Housing NZ, expecting the state-owned enterprise to make \$39 million this year and \$123 million the next.

These millions are coming from the market rents that even housing minister Murry McCully admitted would push 7,000 state tenants out of their homes.

The government intends having market rents fully phased in by July 1.

Alliance leader Sandra Lee described the state as a "rack-renter", while Labour housing spokesperson Paul Swain slammed Housing NZ's "obscene" profits.

**An internal memo reveals that Health Waikato is facing drastic cuts to surgery levels at its public hospitals because of an acute funding shortage.**

Crown health enterprises are now contracted to do a precise number of operations rather than the amount actually needed as they arise.

Health Waikato is working ahead of its general surgery contract by 22 per cent and consequently is running out of its budget.

Hospitals in Marlborough and Otago are faced with the same problem.

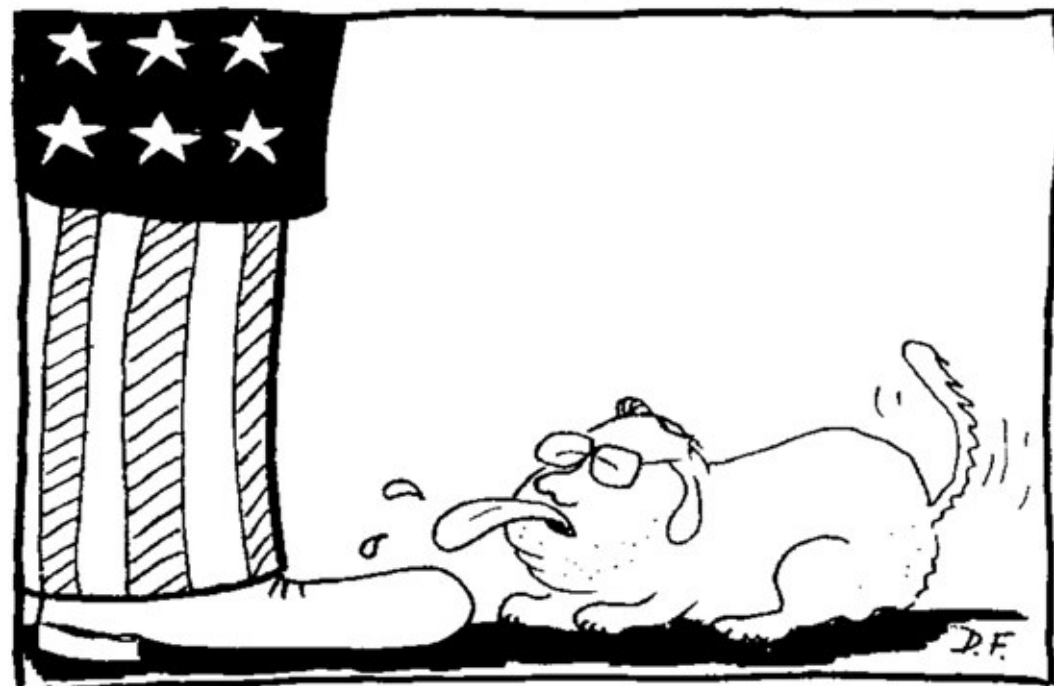
Meanwhile, North Health has been given another \$5.5 million to reduce surgery waiting lists. But even government-appointed chief executive Garry Wilson complained that "it won't solve the problems of all the people currently waiting".

The government is refusing to release the early findings of a report that shows school leavers are being put off tertiary studies because of the cost of fees, according to Labour's deputy leader David Caygill.

He said a request under the Official Information Act for the study's interim findings had been refused by the minister of education.

A spokesperson for Lockwood Smith said there was no intention to withhold the report permanently, but at the moment it was still in draft form.

But Caygill replied that the report had been scheduled for release eight months ago.



## POLITICIANS GET MORE PAY FOR LESS WORK

MPs got pay increases of up to 5.2 per cent late last year.

The prime minister's salary went up \$9,000 to \$181,500 a year - plus extras like free accommodation and free transport.

Backbenchers had to make do with a rise of \$3,500, giving them a mere \$71,000 a year - \$1,365 a week.

Plus lots of perks, of course.

MPs are doing less for their inflated income. Because of National's slender majority, the parliamentary order paper contains far fewer government bills than usual.

But there is an increase in the number of insults being hurled across the debating chamber.

In the unforgettable words of beehive journo Jane Clifton, MPs are "getting both lazier and ruder".

Yet politicians say workers can't get pay rises unless these are more than offset by productivity rises.

Clearly, there's one rule for politicians pay rises and another for workers.

# Increase in number of strikes points the way forward

## First big dispute on wharves since 1989 port reform



PICKET at Auckland wharf: the first major showdown on the waterside since the Labour government's restructuring in 1989 which slashed the workforce in half. See report on page 15.

## Cops redefine the rules

by GRANT MORGAN

**THERE'S ONE law for them and another law for us.**

That's the only conclusion a reasonable person could draw from what happened to Wi Huata, husband of top ACT leader Donna Awatere-Huata, following his assault on CounterACT protester Sue Bradford.

Huata whacked Bradford twice on the head in front of many witnesses.

He was arrested for assault, then given police diversion which allows him to avoid a criminal conviction.

Yet diversion is supposed to be restricted to minor offences. Up till now, a potentially serious assault by a large, aggressive man on a woman

hasn't been considered "minor".

Now the cops seem to have redefined the rules to suit someone connected with ACT, the extreme Right party of big business, which makes great play about the need for "law and order".

CounterACT protesters told *Socialist Worker* that if they'd thrown a punch the cops would have been down on them like a ton of bricks.

This sorry saga shows there is no "neutral" institution in our class-divided society.

**Every organisation has to take sides in the struggle between capital and labour.**

The role of the police is to provide the sort of "law and order" that protects the profit-driven exploitation of the vast majority by a minority of fat cats.

**THERE IS** a quickening of the pace of industrial unrest. Strikes, pickets and protests are flaring up all round the country.

Worried captains of industry and National Party politicians are warning workers not to jeopardise the economic recovery by going for wage rises that make up some of the ground lost over the last decade.

But workers have had a gutsful. They're urging their union officials to take a harder stance against the bosses.

This issue of *Socialist Worker* reflects the upturn in worker activism, with reports of struggles involving meat workers, firefighters, building products workers, primary teachers, rail workers, wharfies and timber mill workers.

Our middle page feature declares, "It's time for workers to fight back", but doesn't leave it at that. We go into detail about how workers can get organised to defeat the bosses and their government.

Significantly, the Trade Union Federation will next

month unveil plans for a combined wages campaign. This will include "strategic strikes", says TUF secretary Maxine Gay.

**TUF only covers 33,000 workers in 12 unions. However, its combined wages campaign has the potential to become a rallying point for the increasing anger and militancy of a wide spectrum of workers.**

There is a need for all workers to support each other in strikes against the wealthy minority raking in fat profits at our expense.

And if this is coupled with an increase in the number of worker activists who join the Socialist Workers Organisation, the ground is laid for advancing beyond single issue politics and building a politically aware movement able to challenge the bosses all down the line.

## "Hone" Carter whips racist government

CHIEF GOVERNMENT whip John Carter's disgusting "Hone" impersonation on talkback radio (sample: I don't want the fiscal envelope because "I won't get any more dole") just makes public the racist core of the National government.

His caucus colleagues kept him in the whip's position despite the roar of outrage from all corners of Aotearoa.

"Hone" Carter must be sacked as chief whip. His talkback mate John Banks must go from cabinet too. And if the prime minister really wanted to cleanse his government of racism, he would demand that they be expelled from caucus altogether.

## Victory for mass action

**AFTER A 6,000-strong march in Kaitia (population: 8,000), the threat to cut the hospital's surgical services has been withdrawn for the immediate future.**

This is a victory for mass action. It achieved what months of appeals and negotiations could not.

The huge protest shook the government so much that health minister Jenny Shipley backed away from her previous hard line advocacy of downgrading rural hospitals.

So the Kaitia march didn't just save the local hospital, but others around the country as well.

"I think this should show other areas that if you pull together you can move mountains," said Millie Srboj, leader of the Kaitia Hospital Action Group.

## Socialist Worker

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## Arms, not alms

120 STATE leaders at a UN social development summit in Denmark discussed the problems of the world's 1.3 billion poor.

They came up with vague resolutions but no remedial action.

During their weekend talk-fest, 400,000 more children were born into poverty around the globe.

The \$46 million spent on the summit was the same as one year of American aid to poverty-stricken Haiti.

It's estimated that if 10 per cent of the arms budget of America and other world powers was diverted to social development in the Third World, global starvation would be eliminated almost overnight.

But capitalism wouldn't be capitalism if it put alms ahead of arms.

## THINGS THEY SAY

"I do not think, quite frankly, that we should be embarrassed that those adequately equipped to earn high incomes do so."

Finance minister Bill Birch, who earns over \$160,000 with expenses.

"We're not talking about making the rich poorer."

ACT leader Roger Douglas.

"It's a weak result in a very difficult year."

Peter Such, chairperson of Cathy Pacific, on a \$480 million profit.

"It's remarkable how quickly prices go up in response to the dollar dropping in value - and how we hear all sorts of excuses not to lower prices when the dollar swings the other way."

Consumers Institute chief executive David Russell on how importers and retailers have been quick in the past to blame a weak Kiwi dollar for price rises.

"There's no scope for a fall in interest rates."

Don Brash, governor of the Reserve Bank.

"You can't talk about democracy when education and health are seen not as a basic right but a privilege."

Ofelia Lopez, jailed in El Salvador for promoting health care to civilians.

"I agree that the United States is the most important member and the main actor. But we must avoid projecting the image that the United Nations is a subcontractor of the US State Department."

UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

## "Not common practice"

AFTER several Auckland high school students helped present a petition opposing tertiary fees to Lockwood Smith, the education minister got the Education Ministry to ring their schools to inquire about their absence from class.

Their father, Barry Lee, said that "such heavy-handed action from the ministry could intimidate schools or students from protesting against government policies".

Lee sent a "please explain" letter to the ministry.

A reply from ministry manager Elizabeth Eppel

defended the actions of Lockwood and his ministry.

Significantly, however, Eppel was compelled to admit that "it is not common practice for the ministry to make such enquiries."

This is as close as any bureaucrat will come to confessing to state intimidation of protesters.



Lockwood faces students

## Keep on working

ANOTHER HORROR story courtesy of the Employment Contracts Act.

A Wellington printing firm offered this contract:

- Staff to keep on working while taking meal and smoko "breaks".
- 64 hours to be worked before overtime paid, and then only \$3 an hour extra.
- The employer can change staff hours without consultation.

Needless to say, the workers were less than impressed. They have taken their case to the union.

## Taking his own advice

WHO SAID this?

"Okay, marxists are opposed to capitalism, we are for the interests of the workers. But there are times when you oppose the capitalists and times when you work with them. Now is not the time to punch them on the nose..."

Answer: Steve Evans, editor of the Socialist Unity Par-

ty's paper, in 1993.

The only thing of note about the SUP is that it's headed by Council of Trade Unions boss Ken Douglas.

So where is Evans now?

Answer: He's taken his own advice and is working with the capitalists. Not long ago he joined the well-paid journalistic staff of the business weekly, *The Independent*.

## what socialists say about...

## The roots of racism

RACISM is not a "natural" or "instinctive" reaction to "outsiders".

It is not even a product of class-divided society in general.

Racism is the quite specific product of the capitalist economic system. It was not a feature of pre-capitalist societies.

In the ancient slave societies of Greece and Rome, slaves (and slave-owners) were both black and white. Although anti-slave ideas ("slaves are naturally inferior" and so on) were rife, they didn't have a racial or skin colour connotation.

The origin of racism lies in the slave trade, in the practice of forcibly seizing and shipping millions of black Africans to the Americas to work as slaves on the plantations.

This trade and the slavery that followed it were immensely profitable and played a major role in the rise of capitalism.

## JUSTIFICATION

But like all forms of exploitation, they required ideological justification, and this was supplied by racism.

The inhuman treatment of people was legitimised by the theory that they were sub-human.

The racism that grew from the slave trade was then further boosted by imperialism as a whole.

Capitalism, arising first in Western Europe, was driven by its competitive nature to scour the world for markets for its goods, for raw materials, and then for colonies as outlets for investment and sources of cheap labour.

This brought the merchants, missionaries, businessmen, politicians and soldiers of European capitalism into conflict with the indigenous peoples of the Americas, Asia and Africa - that is, with the black and coloured peoples of the world.

Once again justification was needed. What better than the notion that these people were childlike, primitive and incapable, and that the whole

process of robbery and plunder was really for their own good - that it was the "white man's burden" to lead them slowly to "civilisation".

Racism is not just a legacy of imperialism, however, it is also continually regenerated by contemporary capitalism.

Capitalism rests not only on competition between capitalists, but also on competition between workers, who are encouraged to see each other as rivals for jobs, houses and so on.

It is only through overcoming this competition amongst themselves that workers are able to fight back against the system.

## SCAPEGOAT

Consequently, any ideas such as sexism, nationalism and racism, which set workers against each other and disrupt that unity, are of great advantage to the bosses.

Racism also provides the system and its ruling class with a scapegoat for unemployment and all the other social ills capitalism produces.

For these reasons capitalism, openly or discreetly but nonetheless persistently, stokes the fires of racism so that the racist card is always there to be played when needed.

Racism won't disappear overnight with the socialist revolution. The roots of racism are very deep.

The point is, they are capitalist roots and the moment capitalism is destroyed they will be deprived of further nourishment and begin to wither.

A socialist society which unites workers as collective owners and controllers of production rather than dividing them, which is able to solve the problems of unemployment, homelessness and poverty, and which spreads itself through international solidarity rather than imperialist conquest, will steadily eliminate the last vestiges of racism.

■ JOHN MOLYNEUX

# Reserve Bank throttles workers

by GRANT MORGAN

**SORRY EVERYONE** with home mortgages, you've got to pay more interest because the economic recovery has been stronger than predicted.

That's the latest message from Don Brash, the governor of New Zealand... oops... of the Reserve Bank of New Zealand.

In Don's bureaucrat-babble, "monetary policy must remain tight".

What's that, you say! Us hard-up working folk trying to keep a roof over our heads have to fork out higher interest charges because the economy has been doing *better* than expected?

Yep. And here's why. Under the Reserve Bank Act, passed by the Labour government in 1989, the single aim of monetary policy is to keep inflation within the narrow band of 0-2 per cent.

The Reserve Bank governor is given supreme authority to make sure this happens. In effect, the economy is managed by Don, the high priest of monetary policy, not the elected government.

## Anarchy

The gnomes of the Reserve Bank predicted that economic growth in the 1994-95 year would be 4.4 per cent, whereas the economy actually sprinted ahead by 6.4 per cent – a massive difference in economic terms.

Despite the Reserve Bank's sophisticated, computerised econometric forecasting model, Don didn't come close to predicting this growth spurt because the capitalist free market is sheer anarchy on a global scale.

The kaleidoscope of competitive, profit-driven impulses that hurl the economy every which way defy the principle of precise prediction that underpins the Reserve Bank Act. So Don was caught with his pants down – ugh!

The stronger-than-predicted growth has stoked the fires of inflation. Profit-hungry companies took advantage of rising demand to jack up their prices, particularly in



**DON BRASH**, governor of the Reserve Bank and economic supremo in Aotearoa

the construction and property sectors.

According to Don, there is a "significant risk" that "underlying" inflation will top the 2 per cent upper limit this year.

And "underlying" inflation isn't a real measure of inflation because it excludes interest charges and large "one-off" costs. When these are lumped in, we have what the Reserve Bank bureaucrats call "headline" inflation – which is another name for the consumer price index.

## Losing

The Reserve Bank expects the consumer price index to peak in June at 4.5 per cent. That's way ahead of most pay settlements, meaning workers are losing ground in the tug-of-war between wages and prices.

A prime contributor to this leap in "headline" inflation is the rise in mortgage rates, which is largely a product of the Reserve Bank's tight monetary policy.

Don says economic growth of 6 per cent is "unsustainable", and a tight monetary policy is needed to bring the economy into a "soft landing" growth curve of 3 to 3.5 per cent in the 1995-96 year.

But this rate of growth

would at best only make a small dent in mass unemployment, which is still around 8 per cent of the workforce.

And economic forecaster Ord Minnett predicts that growth will have to be slowed to as low as 2.5 per cent by higher interest rates before the Reserve Bank will get "headline" inflation below 2 per cent.

Slowing growth to 2.5 per cent would lead to another increase in unemployment. And while there is mass unemployment it's hard for employed workers to win back some of what they've lost in the last decade, leaving them even more vulnerable when the inevitable next slump arrives.

Don's tight monetary policy means that workers are having to pay for doing what the politicians told us to do – get the economy into high growth mode by accepting sacrifices and producing more.

Workers get shafted during recessionary storms and then we get done again when the economic skies turn blue. Meanwhile most employers are raking in record profits.

That's the way capitalism works, folks.

## Currency system close to meltdown

by GRANT MORGAN

**A MASSIVE** slide in the value of the US dollar, the British pound and the French franc is shaking currency markets.

The US dollar declined by 12 per cent in the first ten weeks of 1995, twice as much as the whole of last year.

This free-fall of the world's premier currency has brought the international currency system close to meltdown.

Money markets are showing a lack of confidence in America's ability to solve its astronomical budget and trade deficits.

The big business magazine *The Economist* warns that "a full-scale

panic could easily start" among international financial traders.

New Zealand's "open economy" cannot be insulated from this global crisis.

While the unprecedented slide in the value of the US dollar cuts \$2 billion from the New Zealand foreign debt, this will be more than offset by a huge decline in the value of New Zealand exports to the world's dollar zone.

The quick-profit financiers who shift a **trillion** dollars around the world in an average day have the power to smash Reserve Bank governor Don Brash's dream of a "soft landing" for the New Zealand economy.



**HARRASSED CHICAGO** currency traders try to keep up with demand for Japanese yen in the wake of the collapse in the value of the US dollar.

## "Tougher times ahead"

**A SHARP** drop in manufacturers confidence in the past three months points to "tougher times ahead", according to the Auckland Manufacturers Association chief executive, Bruce Goldsworthy.

The association's February survey indicated that 36 per cent of respondents expected a fall in general confidence over the next three to six months. This compared with just 19 per cent in January.

Goldsworthy said the latest survey confirmed the effect of higher interest and exchange rates.

Coupled with lower forward orders, this meant manufacturing was coming under renewed pressure to trim costs and increase productivity, he said.

What he didn't say was that workers would be expected to bear the burdens of these "tougher times ahead".



# Global protests against education cuts

by BARRY LEE

**LIVELY PROTESTS** against government attacks on public education took place in New York, London and across Australia late last month.

## NEW YORK

On March 24, 10,000 students and teachers held a rally outside city hall to protest against education cuts.

Next morning, 500 demonstrated outside a breakfast held for extreme Right senator Newt Gingrich.

Two weeks before, 40,000 New York workers and students had marched against cuts in healthcare.

## LONDON

On March 25, 30,000 parents, teachers and pupils marched against the government's latest round of education cuts despite the main teachers union saying to stay away because it was "a front for extreme Left organisations".

The campaign has attracted people who've never been on demonstrations before.

Organisers believe there is a possibility of building a fighting alliance of teachers, parents and pupils that goes beyond single issue politics.

## AUSTRALIA

March 24 was a day of action against student fees, and included marches of 5,000 in Melbourne, 600 in Canberra



Aussie students from Canberra University say: "No fees for degrees"

and 200 in Bathurst.

In Canberra, campus police arrested one protester for being too slow to move in the direction they wanted. Others sat

down and eventually 17 people were piled into paddy wagons.

But the demonstrators stuck together and insisted they wouldn't leave

the busy intersection unless the arrested people were freed. And they were, sweaty, but convinced that solidarity can win.

# German strike wins better deal

**STRIKE ACTION** has won pay rises for German engineering workers and defeated company clawbacks.

After a 10 day strike by 20,000 engineers at 30 Bavarian factories, union leaders signed a two year,

no clawback deal they say is worth 4 per cent.

Before the strike, employers had refused to discuss pay rises unless the union first made concessions.

The Bavarian deal is expected to flow onto

other German states, where several hundred thousand members of the giant engineering union IG Metall have held warning strikes to back up their pay demands.

While significant, the deal doesn't compensate German workers for what they've lost over the past 3 years when wages were held below inflation. Nor does it compensate for the government's 7 per cent tax rise imposed this year.

The union got an 88 per cent vote for all-out strike action across Bavaria, but IG Metall leaders called strikes in only one part of the industry, leaving key sectors like the car industry still working.

Despite these weaknesses at the top, the no clawback pay rise will help other German workers improve their wages. Banking, insurance, construction, chemical and state workers are now threatening strike action.

## Profiting from East Timor

by BARRY LEE

**WEALTHY PEOPLE** in Aotearoa have a monetary stake in Indonesia's bloody occupation of East Timor.

A company with substantial New Zealand ownership is reaping huge profits from Timor Sea oil.

Shortly after Jakarta's 1975 invasion of East Timor, the Indonesian and Australian governments signed a treaty for the joint exploitation of East Timor oil reserves. This deal was a key factor in Canberra's endorsement of the occupation.

Among the companies that rushed to get a slice of the profits from East Timor oil was Cultus Petroleum, which is 30 per cent owned by interests associated with Auckland businessmen Michael Fay and David Richwhite.

Despite a price slump on the global oil market, Cultus doubled its last half-yearly profit, mainly because of its investments in East Timor oil. There are plans to expand these investments.

## Timor petition

The East Timor Independence Committee is circulating a petition against New Zealand's military cooperation with Indonesia. To get copies, write to ETIC, PO Box 68-419, Auckland or contact *Socialist Worker*.

## Playing to rule

When the managers of San Francisco Symphony Orchestra refused to pay overtime, orchestra members decided they wouldn't play past noon, when overtime hours should have begun.

The audience and the director were stunned when a trombonist shouted "stop" halfway through Scheherazade and the musicians walked off the stage.

## Pay to pee

Gainers meat packing plant in Alberta, Canada, has introduced a "pay to pee" policy. Workers are docked for time spent in the toilets. Their union is opposing the measure.

Meanwhile, workers at a telemarketing firm in San Francisco were sacked for joining a union to oppose stand-over bosses who told them not to drink too much water to reduce visits to the toilet.

## Kremlin intrigue

As Boris Yeltsin becomes more besieged in the Kremlin his chief aide, Sergei Filatov, says he has no control over the Russian president's personal security force.

The result is a real saga of Kremlin intrigue. Some officials fear their offices are being bugged by the out-of-control security force.

"In my office some people are using pen and paper to communicate, for fear of talking out loud," reported Filatov.

## Government U-turn

The Italian government has done a U-turn on plans to attack pensions after massive demonstrations and strikes. After talks with the unions, the government agreed to boost pensions and job creation.

## Middle class shrinks

Over the last decade, the middle class in the United States has shrunk by 12 per cent.

Of that 12 per cent, one in twelve found their way into the wealthy elite who rule America. But eleven out of twelve sank down into the working class.

The number of US citizens living in extreme poverty rose over the same period to 30 million.

# History being made on Pakaitore Marae

TWO GROUPS from Rotorua visited Pakaitore Marae (Moutoa Gardens), Wanganui, on March 27.

There were 15 of us representing Whaiora-Whakaruru and the Socialist Workers Organisation.

We were warmly welcomed onto the marae by kaumatua and huia of the local tribe.

After the mihi I spoke on behalf of the SWO, saying we'd come to see, to learn and to support the struggle.

I outlined our policy of assisting the working class to get rid of the capitalist system and replace it with socialism.

I thanked the iwi for their warm welcome and gave a koha of a bundle of *Socialist Workers* and a quantity of food on behalf of the whole group.

My speech and the papers were well received.

The atmosphere on the marae is one of peace and calmness.

There are many elders present. Great attention is paid to visitors. Food is available all the time, the place is clean and tidy, and clearly the organisation is excellent.

Groups of supporters are arriving all the time. As we left a group of 150 Pakeha arrived to give support. In a moving moment one of the visitors sang "Scotland the Brave".

Local and visiting groups provide regular entertain-

ment. In the afternoon we listened to a talk by Ken Mair on the history of the land and the issues at stake.

On the marae you have the sense that history is being made.

BERNIE HORNFECK  
Rotorua

## letters to the editor

Agree? Disagree? Send a letter to: *Socialist Worker*, PO Box 8851, Auckland. Keep them brief, please.



## Bad news for PM



PETER HUGHES holds paper (headline: "Families beg for accomodation") in front of the prime minister, supported by Sue Henry. They are surrounded by 150 hostile suits containing Auckland's wealthiest.

150 OF Auckland's wealthiest attended a city council junket to open Westfield Industrial park in mid-March.

They crowded into a marquee to hear prime minister Jim Bolger praise them for leading the "revolution being wrought in NZ industry".

Unlike them, I hadn't received a gold-lettered personal invitation to what was officially a "public" event but was really a "good news" publicity stunt for the PM and his business cronies.

I went along anyway to confront the PM with the bad news situation of working class families getting appalling wages because of the Employment Contracts Act and unable

to afford decent housing under the government's market rents policy.

Similar concerns were voiced by a small group of uninvited citizens.

Among the crowd were two Labour MPs, Judith Tizard and Richard Northey. They listened passively to the PM's snow job about New Zealand's "economic miracle", and kept their heads well down when I shouted out that the recovery has been built on the backs of poor working class people.

Mayor Les Mills was so upset by the interjections that he left the PM's side and threatened me with eviction if I didn't shut up.

In response, I waved a recent community paper's front page headline "Fami-

lies beg for accomodation" in front of the PM.

Sergeant Brown from the PM's diplomatic squad had a brief wrestle with me and threatened me with arrest if I didn't leave.

But the cop quickly released his grip on me as the TV cameras swung away from the PM and onto the melee. The "good news" machine was in danger of producing some bad news.

As sergeant Brown's hostility was being echoed by all the suits surrounding us and there was still no sign of support from the Labour MPs, our small band beat a tactical retreat.

PETER HUGHES  
Auckland

## RAILWORKERS STANDING FIRM

WE WERE at the Combined Union of Rail Employees picket of Hillside workshops and the freight yard on March 29.

They're standing firm and are talking about rolling stoppages if Rail management try to tough it out.

Also, when the National Union of Railworkers contract runs out in August, they're talking about joint action.

ANDREW GEDDIS  
Dunedin

## Tory tool

ROGERNOMICS has been pursued by the tories of Jim Bolger.

They are blathering that government is about balanced books and near zero inflation.

The net result is permanent unemployment - a tory tool to coerce the lowering of worker income, acceptance of individual contracts and escalation of user pays.

All with the burden of profit-motivated middle men dealing in essential services, and the slashing of public services.

DAVID MOSHE YISRAEL  
Wellington

## They made me pay for care

I LOST my right leg in an accident.

When I first left hospital, I went into a unit my family got me with 14 hours for a care person.

But as soon as I was installed, the Accident Compensation Corporation with the doctor's connivance brought that down to four hours.

I don't know if you can imagine the physical and mental stress that caused.

I went in and out of hospital until they got sick of me and stuck me in a rest home cum hospital.

They made me pay them out of my bank account. When I objected, they claimed that most likely I'd get it all back - but this didn't happen.

I'm sending you all the papers. I think there is a good story in it.

ACC VICTIM  
Auckland

## No money for burial

INCOME SUPPORT Services told me they could help me to pay for a hearing aid.

So when I got the bill from the hospital, I took it to ISS.

They asked me what assets I had. "Enough to bury me," I replied.

They said: "You'll have to buy your own hearing aid".

I asked who is going to bury me.

Their reply: "We'll make an advance to the family".

I'll repeat the statement of a friend: "If ever we need socialism, we need it now".

PENSIONER  
West Coast

# It's time for workers to fight back

## Class nature of capitalism

### ARE YOU in the working class?

The answer is "yes" if you and your family don't own or manage a business and must therefore sell your ability to work to an employer. This is the socialist definition of working class. It reflects the position that is at the heart of capitalism - workers get back far less from the system than they put into it because the wealth they create is the property of the bosses.

The bosses would lose control if they were to admit that the central division in society is between exploiters and exploited, employers and workers, rich and poor.

The continuation of capitalism hinges on splitting the working class by manufacturing divisions, between white collar/blue collar, male/female, Pakeha/Maori, employed/unemployed, skilled/unskilled, young/old, union/non-union.

But a 50-year-old female Pakeha data processor faces the same low pay, job insecurity and employer discipline as a 20-year-old male Polynesian bus driver. Both are working class, as are teachers and networkers, electricians and nurses, shop assistants and factory hands.

The latest census statistics indicate that working class people make up 80 per cent of New Zealand's total population.

The remaining 20 per cent fall into two classes. There is the handful of millionaires who control the factories, transport networks, media, banks, state enterprises and other important economic institutions. This ruling class makes key investment decisions which shape all our lives and uses its economic power to lend governments to its will.

And then there is the more numerous middle class. They are the managers and executives, lawyers and accountants, farmers and entrepreneurs who administer the system on behalf of the ruling class and operate small businesses in the shadow of the monopolies. Mostly the middle class follows the ruling class, but sections may swing behind the working class when it makes a strong stand.

Your class can't be changed by adjusting a different lifestyle, such as the "youth culture", "gay culture" or "alternative culture". Class isn't based on status, education, clothes or language.

Class flows from the economic and political structure of society. But it only becomes real in the course of struggle between the exploited

and their exploiters. Members of each group identify with others like themselves as they oppose those in the other group.

The class struggle goes on everywhere. Recent examples in Auckland include the gay party pulled by primary teachers, the community march to save Kaihia Hospital, the road blockade to keep fighter bomber jets, the Maori fight against the facial envelope, the student opposition to tertiary fees.

When struggle breaks out, previously divided individuals begin to see their

interests as a group. They start to become class conscious.

They make links with other exploited people and feel the strength of numbers.

Their confidence grows when they see that it's possible to organise mass actions which challenge the power of the ruling class.

Partly why the bosses hate any mention of class struggle and why socialists stress the importance of working class unity in the fight against capitalism.

## FOUR-FIFTHS, ONE-FIFTH SOCIETY

CONSUMER prices rose 1.3 per cent faster than last year's wages, and salaries last year, says Statistics NZ.

This fall in real wages follows the same trend as last decade-and-a-half.

In 1980, wages and salaries were 57 per cent of Australia's "economic cost", but are now only 42 per cent. That's a 15 per cent slide in resources from the poor to the rich in the space of 15 years.

Today, the top one-fifth of NZ households get 40 per cent of all pre-tax income, up from 35 per cent in the late 1970s. The bottom four-fifths share the remaining 60 per cent, which is expected to fall to 50 per cent within two years.

The distribution of income shows we're a four-fifths, one-fifth society.

The ruling class and their middle class managers together make up only 20 per cent of total population but control about half the country's income.

The working class, which make up four-fifths of total population, can't create wealth, as wages are kept so low that they can't get the

other half.

It reminds you of the olden days story about the pirate captain who told his blood-thirsty crew: "as they've raked life and limb to capture a treasure ship," "I believe in an equal split of the booty. I'll take half and you lot can divide the other half amongst yourselves."

All that capitalism can offer are yesterday's disgusting inequalities dressed up in new forms.

And the government says there are equalities will grow more extensive and

that doesn't worry them.

In an address to an Employment Federation seminar on March 15, finance minister Bill English had this to say about income disparities in New Zealand: "They are widening and they will widen much more. That doesn't worry me."

Later, Jim Bolger defended Bush's comments.

Finance minister and politicians have roomed up the NZ ship of state and are diving up the booty to suit themselves.

Can workers fight back? Can union be rebuilt? Can the bosses be defeated? The answer is YES. We are taking the first steps towards a working class recovery, as GRANT MORGAN explains.



## Union centre plans combined wages campaign

INDUSTRIAL BUSH fires are flaring all around NZ, but the Council of Trade Unions hierarchy refuses to coordinate them into a general wages campaign, a well-connected official in a major CTU union told Socialist Worker.

Instead, CTU leaders have made conscious decisions to wind back any mass actions and steer workers towards Labour Party electoral politics, said the official.

Maxine Gay, secretary of the Trade Union Federation, told Socialist Worker that TUF invited the CTU last November "to meet with us to plan a year-long wages campaign". CTU secretary Angela Foulkes

just ignored the invitation, reported Gay. "The CTU isn't interested in working with us."

In February, the TUF national council agreed in principle to a "major campaign" to lift wages, said Gay. This will be fleshed out with specific decisions at the TUF national conference on May 1-2.

### Strategic strikes

Included will be "strategic strikes" and "community organising" for a "one-off general wage rise" and an increase in the minimum wage, the TUF secretary predicted.

She said the TUF is particularly concerned with "increasing the wages of those on the bottom".

TUF wants the minimum wage lifted over three years to \$9 an hour, two-thirds of the average wage. A call to bring mass to TUF affiliates next across any contract containing a four-year rate less than \$7.30, which TUF's first year target for the minimum wage.

TUF officials are reporting a change of mood, more desire by members to have a go, Gay stated. "In-wisely, people have had enough and are looking for something to mobilise around."

## Organise mass actions and join the socialists

### JOB DELEGATES are the backbone of the union movement.

They are the essential springboard for mass-action direct actions which turn a union from an office-bound bureaucracy into a democratic, fighting organisation.

Socialist Worker estimates there are 10,000 job delegates in New Zealand. Among their ranks are some of the best worker militants in the country.

Of course, the anti-union and the nasty '90s have had a depressing impact on delegates, just like the rest of the union movement.

Some delegates have become tired, pessimistic and conservative, compromising with the boss rather than building the fightback.

But the union struggles that are flaring up with more frequency are mostly driven by the grass roots, and a key role is being played by delegates who want to have a go.

### Campaign

The Trade Union Federation will soon be launching a call for a combined wages campaign. This has the potential to become a rallying point in the union movement for those who want to fight the bosses.

It has already been passed by the executive of the Council of Trade Unions, which governs the vast majority of NZ unions.

To turn the combined wages campaign into reality, therefore, members of CTU unions need to go against their top officials and link up with members of TUF unions in a united struggle.

What the country's 10,000 delegates do will be crucial to the success or failure of this combined wages campaign.

Flak is already flying from the bosses and the govern-

ment. They're screaming that a big wage rise will make New Zealand uncompetitive and burst the recovery and make everybody worse off.

To convince their workmates that this employer propaganda is crap, delegates have to reject the ideas of capitalism.

They should be saying that if the system cannot deliver a decent living to the workers who create the wealth, then the system must be changed, and a first step is to cut into the profits of the employers.

To put this sort of message across, delegates need the ideas contained in Socialist Worker.

They need to understand

that the growing anger among workers can very quickly translate into strikes and protests when there is decisive leadership.

They need to organise mass actions and join the socialists to turn things around.

### Impulse

If significant numbers of the country's 10,000 delegates were to join the Socialist Workers Organisation, this would give a tremendous impulse to the fighting ability of the working class.

It would mean that links could be forged between worker militants all round Aotearoa.

The different actions could

be centralised so they packed a united punch.

The lessons of each struggle could be reported to other workers in Socialist Worker.

Socialist ideas that exposed the lies of capitalism could be spread far and wide.

A sense of "an against them" could spread like wildfire and galvanise broad sections of workers.

This is the way we've got to go if our class is going to beat the bosses. There's no alternative.

Each job delegate, each worker activist, has the power to help our society for the better. It's time for action!

## Bosses fear strike wave

THE MOOD among NZ workers is changing. There are definite signs of more anger, more militancy, more solidarity. This is seen in the rising number of strikes since 1993.

However, there's still nowhere near the number of strikes there were in the two decades to 1985. The Rogernomics revolution and the Employment Contracts Act kindled the struggling of workers.

Now workers are again striking, but their anger is tempered by a caution born out of a string of defeats.

So not many are prepared to go against the will of their union hierarchies, unlike the struggle. "We want workers often sent out on strike in defiance of their officials and usually won."

The privileges of union hierarchies hinge on them being antagonists between capital and labour, so they tend to resist mass struggles which threaten to bypass them. That's why most union hierarchies have traditionally been bastions of conservatism within the labour movement.

This trend has become more marked over recent years as leaders of the Council of Trade Unions mainly adapted to free market policies and anti-union legislation instead of mobilising workers against the attacks of capitalism.

Remember how Ken Douglas and the CTU executive refused to lead rank-and-file calls for a general strike in 1991 to "kill the bill", a heavy fine for the sell-out in being paid by workers suffering under the Employment Contracts Act?

Socialist Worker estimates there are 500 full-time union officials in Aotearoa. Most are in unions affiliated to the CTU, which claims over

enough 30,000 workers.

If all of these 500 officials were to throw themselves into a combined wages campaign, then workers would become far more confident about striking for a share of the profit recovery.

The bosses are worried about the prospect of a strike wave.

The chief executive of the Employees Federation, Steve Marshall, said on March 13 that he detected the beginnings of a campaign "through the remaining structure of organised labour" for a general wage rise.

"It would be quite possible to attempt to drive wages up by way of claims supported by disruptive activity in key sectors of the economy and in most industrial sectors," he declared.

But the CTU executive has assured us after for a combined wages campaign would be the south island Trade Union Federation, which covers 33,000 workers.

The impulse for a working class fightback isn't going to come from CTU leaders or their allies in the conservative union hierarchies.

The turnaround will be driven by rank-and-file activists who organise strikes and protests which make other workers more confident about going into action.

Such a rank-and-file response will be needed to give life to TUP's wages campaign and draw in the vast bulk of union members affiliated to the COTU. And pressure from below can make at least some union officials come "on side" with workers who want action.

The bosses can live with Ken Douglas but they fear the mass actions of workers.



## Socialism

Capitalism is a system of exploitation which generates inequality, crisis and war.

Although workers create society's wealth, it is controlled by the ruling class for its own selfish ends.

Socialism can only be built when the working class takes control of social wealth and democratically plans its production and distribution to meet human needs, not private profits. This will eliminate all class divisions in society.

Stalinist countries such as China and Cuba, just like the former Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc, have nothing to do with socialism. They are state capitalist. We support the struggles of workers against every dictatorial stalinist ruling class.

## Revolution not reformism

The present system cannot be reformed to end exploitation and oppression, contrary to what Alliance, Labour and union leaders claim. It must be overthrown by the working class.

Capitalism's parliament, army, police and judiciary protect the ruling class. These institutions cannot be taken over and used by the working class.



**where  
we  
stand**

To pave the way to socialism the working class needs a new kind of state – a democratic workers state based on workers councils and workers militia.

## Internationalism

Workers in every country are exploited by capitalism, so the struggle for socialism is global.

We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries. We fight racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls. We support all genuine national liberation struggles.

We are internationalists because socialism depends on spreading working class revolutions around the world.

## Liberation from oppression

We fight for democratic rights. We oppose the oppression of women, Maori, Pacific Islanders, lesbians and gays.

All forms of oppression are used to divide the working class.

We support the right

of all oppressed groups to organise for their own defence. Their liberation is essential to socialist revolution and impossible without it.

## Tino rangatiratanga

We support the struggle for Maori self determination.

The government's approach to Treaty claims has benefited a Maori elite while doing little for working class Maori.

Tino rangatiratanga cannot be achieved within capitalism. It will only become a reality with the establishment of a workers state.

## Revolutionary party

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a mass revolutionary socialist party.

We are in the early stages of building such a party through involvement in the day-to-day struggles of workers and the oppressed.

The Socialist Workers Organisation must grow in size and influence to provide leadership in the struggle for working class self-emancipation.

We need to revitalise the unions with a rank-and-file movement.

If you like our ideas and want to fight for socialism, then join us.

## socialist activity

# Paper sales steady, links with strikers

AT LEAST 1,150 copies of *Socialist Worker* no. 2 were sold around the country.

Papers went out to workers on strike, like wharfies, railworkers and building products workers, plus other people in struggle like firefighters and CounterACT protesters.

30 copies of *Socialist Worker* were part of the Socialist Workers Organisation's koha to Maori rights campaigners at Pakaitore Marae.

Street sales were pretty good. In Auckland, 68 papers were sold in two shopping centres, and another 13 in Dunedin's Octagon.

Timberlands branch sold 200 in the Bay of Plenty region, a substantial increase. At one workers club, 18 were sold among the 30 people there.

Waikato branch sold 30 in a door-to-door canvas.

Sales were steady on university campuses: 33 in Waikato, 26 in Dunedin and 12 in Auckland.

Wellington and Timberlands branches each gained a new member over the last two weeks. After subtracting one dropout, this brings SWO membership to 92.

## SWO branch meetings – all welcome

**AUCKLAND** 7pm every Tuesday at the Socialist Centre, 86 Princes St, Onehunga. Phone 6343 984.

April 11 **Are the unions dead?**

April 18 **How Left is the Alliance?**

April 25 **What is nationalism?**

**Paper sales** Every Saturday, meet at the Socialist Centre at 10am.

**WAIKATO** 7pm every second Tuesday at the Red Cross Hall, London St, Hamilton. Phone Ross in Hamilton 8476 302.

April 12 **How to help build fighting unions.**

April 26 **Why we need a socialist party.**

**TIMBERLANDS** 7pm every second Tuesday at Apumoana marae, Tarawera Rd, Rotorua. Phone Bernie 3459 853 or Martial 3574 536 in Rotorua.

April 18 **The Treaty of Waitangi.**

**WELLINGTON** 7.30pm every second Monday at People's Resource Centre, 2 Luke Lane (off Te Aro Park). Phone Gordon 3877 380.

April 17 **What makes the SWO different?**

May 1 **Working class internationalism.**

**Paper sales** 12 noon to 1.30pm every Thursday at Manners Mall.

**CHRISTCHURCH** 7.30pm every second Sunday at the WEA, 59 Gloucester St. Phone Roy 3844 681.

April 16 **How capitalism is based on legalised theft.**

April 30 **Why we need a socialist party.**

**DUNEDIN** 7.30pm every Thursday at the Clubs & Societies Building, 84 Albany St. Phone Laurel 4736 047 or Brian 4790 245.

April 6 **The fight to defend women's right to abortion.**

April 13 **It's time to rebuild the unions.**

**OTHER AREAS** The Socialist Workers Organisation also has members and supporters in North Shore, Napier, Kawerau, Raglan, Palmerston North, Timaru and the West Coast. They can be contacted through the Socialist Centre in Auckland (09) 6343 984.

## join the socialists

- ☐ I want to join the Socialist Workers Organisation  
☐ I want more information about membership

Name

Address

Phone

Union/campus

Send to: SWO, PO Box 8851, Auckland

**"Philosophers  
have merely  
interpreted  
the world.  
The point is  
to change it."  
— Karl Marx**

# Setting the record straight

**MOST WELLINGTON residents who bothered to read the *Evening Post* editorial on March 15 would have been stunned by the grossly intemperate attack on a small booklet launched a few days earlier.**

"Setting the Record Straight" is written by Auckland academics Jane Kelsey and Mike O'Brien and published by the Association of Non-Government Organisations of Aotearoa (ANGOA).

## COUNTER REPORT

It was conceived as a counter-report to that given by the New Zealand government to the World Summit on Social Development, held in Copenhagen on March 11-12.

The *Evening Post* editorial accused "Setting the Record Straight" of being "grossly distorted", "inaccurate and biased", "untrue", "ludicrous", containing "consistently skewed material".

It was, claimed the editorial, a "highly political response" by "mischievous authors and backers", an "obviously disaffected" group who are "racist" for saying that Maori are "suppressed and ill-treated".

However, a quick read of the booklet shows the extreme right-wing nature of the comments by the *Evening Post* editor, as well as those by Labour's Michael Cullen and National's Jenny Shipley who likewise condemned "Setting the Record Straight".

The easy-to-read 64-page booklet is full of

facts, statistics and quotes from the promoters as well as the critics of the social and economic experiment in Aotearoa over the last 15 years.

It deals with the impact of the "New Zealand structural adjustment programme" on Maori, workers, women, beneficiaries and other marginalised groups in society.

It points out that the government's report to the Copenhagen summit failed to mention the benefit cuts of 1991 and the abolition of other benefits.

**It gives detailed evidence of how the gap between rich and poor has widened over the past decade-and-a-half.**

## ROOT CAUSE

If the booklet has any faults, they aren't those alleged by the *Evening Post*. Rather it is the problem of many reports of this nature - the failure to identify the root cause of our economic and social problems.

That root cause is capitalism itself. A failure to recognise this leads to the reformist path of trying to ease the excesses of capitalism rather than trying to overthrow the system that simply cannot deliver prosperity to the working class.

In spite of this weakness, however, "Setting the Record Straight" is an essential read for all working class and social justice activists.

**Make sure you get a copy. Send \$7 to ANGOA, PO Box 12-470, Wellington.**

# It's the real thing

**"THE HARDER you work the luckier you get," said Dean Wills, picking up his money after 20 years on the board.**

Dean Wills was the chief executive of Coca Cola in Australia until February and he was handed just under \$22 million as he went. This is said to be the highest payout for any Australian executive.

Well, it does seem a hell of a lot, but then of course you and I don't really know just how hard Dean did actually toil to get so lucky.

Maybe he typed all his own business letters and did his own photocopying.

Perhaps he cooked and served all the firm's business lunches around at his place instead of wasting money on restaurant expense accounts.

Or it might have been that after his normal day's round of meetings and consultations he quietly slipped down to the plant, put on some overalls and stayed all alone putting tops on Coke bottles hour after hour after hour...

But if we never know exactly how Dean worked hard enough to be worth \$22 million, we do know this much. We now know that at Coca Cola hard work is properly recognised and rewarded by the firm.

This is unique among capitalist enterprises.

Everywhere else I know, if you work extra hard the most likely thing to happen is you'll finish up permanently doing two operations in the time it once took to do one and your pay will stay right the same.

But now we know that in a harsh and uncaring world at least there's justice at Coke.

And this is very timely.

On the same day as Dean's payoff was announced, we also learnt that Coca Cola intends to close its Upper Hutt plant by the end of August



this year.

But the good news is that this plant is rated by the managing director as Number 1 in the firm's South Pacific division for reaching production and efficiency targets.

Last time I looked, Australia was sited in the South Pacific, so the workers at the Upper Hutt Coke plant must have outperformed even the great Dean Wills.

**So while it's bad that jobs are leaving Upper Hutt, it's a comfort to know that the hardworking staff at the plant will be getting upwards of 22 million bucks apiece when the time comes for them to go.**

Either that, or Dean's little speech about getting lucky from hard work is all shit.

# JOBS FOR THE BOYS

**JOBS FOR the boys. That's what the government has been handing out to National Party hacks.**

The party president, Geoff Thompson, has been appointed a director of ForestCorp.

A former president,

John Collinge, has gone to London as High Commissioner.

A bunch of Nats kicked out of parliament have got their snouts in the public trough.

Tony Friedlander has been appointed a director of Government Property

Services. Grant Thomas has been appointed a director of Vehicle Testing NZ. And Maurice McTigue was made High Commissioner to Canada.

The ruling elite look after themselves while the working class suffer a decline in living standards.



# The marxist legacy of Rosa Luxemburg

## Revolution, not reformism

**THE IDEA** that capitalism could be made to benefit workers just by tinkering with the system rather than overthrowing it was bitterly opposed by Luxemburg.

She fought for revolutionary politics at a time when reformism was gaining dominance in the German socialist party (SPD).

This struggle was much harder in Germany, where there was an entrenched labour bureaucracy, than what Lenin and Trotsky encountered in Russia where the roots of reformism were weaker.

In her pamphlet "Social Reform or Social Revolution", Luxemburg argued that there was no parliamentary road to socialism.



## The mass strike

**THE ROLE** that the mass strike would play in the revolutionary transformation of society was clearly seen by Luxemburg.

The general strike was regarded by SPD and union leaders as a last resort, a defensive or negative tactic, rather than a key weapon in the working class arsenal.

Luxemburg challenged this idea in her pamphlet "The Mass Strike". The general strike would become increasingly important as capitalism developed, she said, because the socialist revolution had to be an economic as well as a political challenge to the ruling class.

It was the economic punch of workers, Luxemburg argued, that was the source of their political power.

## Workers creativity

**THE PREVAILING** view at the top of the SPD was that a revolution or mass strike would start by order of the party and union leadership.

Luxemburg challenged this concept of the party being the source of all correct thought and action, while the working class remained passive.

She stressed the creative power of the working class, who spontaneously spark off revolutions and general strikes without an order from "on high".

## Workers democracy

**THE BOLSHEVIK** Revolution in Russia was ardently supported by Luxemburg.

However, she believed that an uncritical acceptance of everything done by the bolsheviks would hold back the international working class movement.

In particular she argued that the repressive measures adopted by the bolsheviks, which were born out of their desperate struggle against enemies more powerful than themselves, should not be regarded by socialists as a universal policy.

A virtue should not be made out of necessity, said Luxemburg.

Workers power meant more democracy for the masses, not its restriction or elimination, she stressed.

The liberation of the working class must be the deed of the working class itself, "...not of a little leading minority in the name of the class..."

### MAY DAY MARCH

**Celebrate International Workers Day**

**Assemble QE II Square, downtown Auckland, 4pm on Monday, May 1**

**Organised by May Day Committee**

On 15 January 1919, a German soldier's rifle butt smashed the skull of Rosa Luxemburg, socialist internationalist, fighter and thinker.

Franz Mehring, the biographer of Marx, upheld Luxemburg as "the finest brain amongst the scientific successors of Marx and Engels".

But she contributed more than her brain alone. As British socialist Tony Cliff notes: "She gave everything she had - her heart, her passion, her strong will, her very life."

**EVAN POATA-SMITH** looks at Luxemburg's outstanding contribution to marxism, which debunks claims that the revolutionary socialist tradition is an expression of "male ideology".

## Revolutionary party

**THE MAJOR** weakness of Luxemburg was her lack of emphasis on exactly what sort of socialist organisation was needed, although she recognised the importance of organisation.

In this she was a product of her time and place.

Although the SPD formally promoted marxism, in practice it included both reformists and revolutionaries.

Luxemburg fought tirelessly against reformism, but the huge membership and influence of the SPD made her think she would be isolated from the working class if she didn't remain within its ranks.

The concept grew within the SPD that socialism would arrive gradually and inevitably, and therefore the party's main job was general propaganda, not practical intervention in the day-to-day struggles of workers.

Luxemburg understood the serious problems inside the SPD and the need to participate in the day-to-day struggle. But she didn't draw proper organisational conclusions from this understanding.

Until it was too late, she remained in the SPD rather than building an independent revolutionary organisation capable of coherently interven-

ing in the day-to-day struggle.

Lenin had led the building of a revolutionary organisation in Russia that was independent of the reformists. Its members gained experience and respect in the workplaces because over the years they were able to promote a consistently revolutionary line.

This allowed them to criticise the waverings of workers after revolution spontaneously broke out in Russia.

The bolsheviks could sustain a minority position within the working class whenever necessary and push the revolution towards a successful conclusion precisely because they weren't split into warring revolutionary and reformist factions.

Luxemburg's failure to build an independent revolutionary socialist party years earlier meant she lacked this solid base in the working class.

The result was tragedy. Luxemburg and many of her comrades paid with their lives in a wave of ruling class reaction.

The failure to build a revolutionary party led to the defeat of the German revolution, and allowed the growth of fascism in Germany and stalinism in Russia.

## Protests support Gay Oakes appeal

30 SUPPORTERS of Gay Oakes gathered at her home town court in Christchurch as she appealed a murder conviction in Wellington.

Protests were held outside other courts around the country.

Gay had suffered

eleven years of serious abuse from her partner, Doug Gardner.

Fearing for her safety, she drugged Gardner and buried his body.

Gay's lawyers said the original trial judge downplayed battered women's syndrome.

The Court of Appeal has reserved its decision.

The case has become a rallying point for a change in the law so the defence of self-preservation is available to battered women in fear of their lives who make a "pre-emptive strike".

## Taming of Shortland Street

by BARRY BROWN

AND YOU thought TVNZ couldn't get worse?

A recent proposed storyline for *Shortland Street* went for a few laughs by having Minnie's mum taking quite the wrong impression when she caught her daughter and a girlfriend practising their kissing technique.

But it won't make the screen – it's been axed for "unwholesomeness".

What was always to the credit of *Shortland Street* was its frank dealing with teenage



Jenny (Maggie Harper) was seen on *Shortland Street* learning about Waverly orchestrating a loss of virginity with Nick – but such topics are now taboo.

sex, which earned it the respect and loyalty of a huge chunk of young people.

But *Shortland Street*'s writers have been brought to heel with a demand that the programme take a Right turn toward "family viewing".

The instructions have come from the top: new TVNZ boss Mike Lattin.

No more Waverley orchestrating a loss of virginity with Nick!

It's the taming of *Shortland Street* – and but one example of the breath of stale air that Lattin has released into the corridors of an already fetid broadcaster.

## The true union-busting story of the Oscars!

by BARRY BROWN

HOLLYWOOD is a suburb of Los Angeles, and most people will tell you that the reason the American film industry based itself here was the weather – it was sunny, perfect for filming in.

Now this is not the whole truth. In fact, not even half the whole truth.

The big thing about Los Angeles for movie entrepreneurs 80 or 90 years ago was that it was an open shop, non-union town, part of California's "wide open (shop) west".

And it is this aspect of Hollywood's history, and the attempts to reverse it, from which springs the **Annual Academy Awards** – on the telly recently.

The Academy Awards were the creation of Irving Thalberg, the union-hating brains behind MGM.

He decided in the 1920s to underline the non-union nature of the movie industry by creating an "Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences". This organisation brought together the executive producers, who did the hiring and firing, and others "working in the industry" – that is, those who were hired and fired.

The Academy accepted only the highest-paid and "most esteemed" of actors, writers and directors. It honoured them with dinners and annual affairs where it presented awards for the best films, performances, direction and scripts and hailed them all as "artists".

Thalberg always made it clear that such

honoured "artists" would never lower themselves to become members of a trade union.

Had he been around Auckland a dozen years ago he would have appreciated the theatre director who, during a company meeting to discuss a wage award, held up and set fire to a ten dollar note in front of the actors, saying: "This is but money – we are artists."

In that case a motion to strike was angrily – and successfully – put.

In the case of Hollywood, the spirit of unionism had to wait till cinema's great techno-

logical revolution arrived: the talkies. For along with the talkies came New York actors, playwrights, novelists and journalists with an East Coast union background.

By 1932 the activities of these newcomers in demanding a slice of the cake caused an anxious Thalberg to urge the Academy to strengthen its organisation to keep "artists" free from union domination.

By 1935 the Academy had its first major scandal when writer Dudley Nichols refused to accept an Oscar for Best Screenplay (*The In-*

former) because of the Academy's continuing attempts to prevent a writers union being formed.

But by the end of the '30s, and after convulsive struggles in which many suffered company blacklisting, Hollywood was finally unionised.

So we could all watch the Academy Awards with a clear conscience – though, given that an Oscar can add millions to a movie's box office takings, the bribery and corruption behind the scenes must make even a Hong Kong criminal court a showcase of fair dealing...

## Dollars and sports

by BARRY BROWN

SHADES OF Michael Fay and the America's Cup! Surely, no sporting event in this country has ever been marketed like the Auckland Warriors' inaugural Winfield Cup season.

Dominion Breweries desperation to have us all drink DB Bitter instead of Lion Red has seen it pump a record \$15 million into the Warriors.

Even the government got into the act, protecting sponsors by fast-tracking a special Winfield tobacco exemption to New Zealand's smoke-free advertising legislation.

There is, though, another side to the relationship of hard cash and rugby league.

Modern football originated in the public schools of Victorian England as a pastime for the sons of the wealthy.

It spread down into the working class, with rugby proving hugely popular in the industrialised cities of the north of England.

But while the Eton Old Boys in the south had money and time to play and

practice games, the north's working class had neither.

So the northern rugby clubs proposed that the amateur Rugby Union allow players to be paid for time off work. The Rugby Union refused: those who couldn't afford to play the game should simply do without it.

That's how the Rugby League came to be formed, a breakaway from the amateur Rugby Union, forever bearing the stigma of money – in fact the first New Zealand league team of 1907 were mockingly dubbed the "All Golds" to distinguish them from the purely amateur All Blacks.

Which brings us to a question asked on this page before: Will we have profes-



Warriors captain Dean Bell

sional sport under socialism?

If someone is gifted in some direction, whether they're Dean Bell or Kiri Te Kanawa, they should be given the resources to take this gift as far as they can.

It's not professionalism that distorts. It's the profit-drive of capitalism.

Probing prying clutching clip-boards.

Ticking square boxes random samples of culture.

Putting percentile points on life.

Scavenging around the boundaries of being.

### Pollster

Allocating ratings to people who no longer listen.

BRIAN SWETE  
Auckland



# First strike for decades



**ROTORUA**  
70 workers employed by Building Systems went on strike on March 22 over a contract dispute.

They were still on the picket line 10 days later as we went to press.

The company is a subsidiary of the profitable corporation Lockwood Buildings.

The workers want a renewal of their existing contract plus a 3 per cent pay rise.

But Building Systems wants to slash overtime and is pushing new contracts where wage rates are determined individually.

Naturally, the workers are worried about losing collective bargaining power.

They are covered by two unions, the Wood Industries Union and the Building Trades Union, which are co-operating in the strike.

The dispute flared up when workers refused overtime and then imposed a load-out ban. The company

retaliated by locking out three loader drivers.

Then all workers walked off the job in the first strike for decades at Building Systems.

There has been enormous support for their picket from other workers.

"The noise of passing motorists honking their horns is deafening," said one picketer. "I've never

heard anything like it before."

Jim Jones, secretary of the Wood Industries Union, said the mood of workers has changed.

A couple of years back "workers decided there was more security in keeping their heads down," he said, but now they feel they're not benefiting from the recovery and are demanding their share.

## Husband of ACT official assaults protester

**AUCKLAND**  
Whack! Whack! Two sickening thumps on the head of CounterACT spokesperson Sue Bradford were delivered by Wi Huata, the six foot, 18 stone husband of top ACT leader Donna Awatere-Huata.

The assault took place on March 13 during a CounterACT protest outside ACT's manifesto launch in Auckland.

The 50 demonstrators talked to the 700 people going into the meeting about the dangers for ordinary folk posed by ACT's extreme Right, big business, user pays policies.

Jeering only broke out when protesters spotted ACT leaders, such as Derek Quigley, Trevor de Cleene, Richard Prebble and Donna Awatere-Huata.

Dozens of witnesses saw Wi Huata punch Sue Bradford, who at the time was talking on the megaphone. Police quickly escorted him to the security of the hall.

Protesters angrily called out for justice. After considerable hesitation, the police arrested Huata for assault.

CounterACT protesters told *Socialist Worker* that they doubted Huata would have been charged if there hadn't been too many witnesses for the cops to ignore.

Wi Huata appeared in court the next day. He was represented by ACT official Trevor de Cleene, a lawyer, who told the judge that Huata would plead guilty to the assault charge.

But the police prosecutor, sergeant Mike Rongo, said Huata was suitable for the police diversion scheme.

Diversion allows first offenders to avoid a criminal conviction for a minor offence by making a donation to charity or doing community work.

### FIREFIGHTERS PETITION SUCCESS

There has been vast support for the firefighters petition. 200,000 signatures have been collected in just three weeks.

The union needs another 50,000 to force a non-binding citizens referendum on Fire Service plans to cut jobs.

Management is spitting tacks over the success of the petition. Ken Comber, chairperson of the Fire Services Commission, lashed out at firefighters for living "in a time warp" and accused them of only working 17 hours a week.

But such propaganda is clearly failing to convince the vast majority.

The crunch will come if management presses ahead with its job cuts. Firefighters will then have to strike if they don't want the public support built up round the petition going to waste.

## Government accepts pay parity principle

LEADERS OF the primary teachers union, the NZEI, have cancelled a membership strike ballot over pay parity.

They say the government now accepts the principle of pay parity and the State Services Commission has agreed to settle the primary teachers contract by the end of May.

The government is worried by the militant mood of primary teachers who walked off the job for two days last month.

However, it doesn't mean that primary teachers will get pay parity on June 1. The NZEI has agreed to participate in a working party on a unified pay system and develop timeframes for its implementation.

But last year a pay parity study was commissioned by the government, which then ignored its findings in favour of pay parity. The latest working party may be just another delaying tactic by the government to take the momentum out of the teachers struggle.

NZEI officials expect a pay rise in the next two months. Just how close this comes to pay parity remains to be seen.

## Partial rent strike grows

**AUCKLAND**  
SHAC is holding a series of suburban meetings to increase the number of state tenants on its partial rent strike as the July 1 deadline for the government's full market rents looms.

For 18 months, SHAC members have been on a partial rent strike, paying just 25 per cent of their net income. They're still safe in their state rental homes.

20 tenants came to SHAC's meeting in Orakei on March 29. The next two meetings are:

- Onehunga 10am, April 5, Carnegie Hall, Princes St.
- Glen Innes 10am, April 12, Community Centre, Line Rd.

All state tenants are welcome. Come and join SHAC's partial rent strike. Phone SHAC chair Peter Hughes (09) 6343 984.

## "Hone" Carter slammed

### AUCKLAND

200 people, mostly Pakeha students, turned out in pouring rain for a rally against the fiscal envelope on March 31.

Among the speakers were representatives of the union movement, Te Kawau Maro and the Socialist Workers Organisation.

Several slammed the government whip, "Hone" Carter, for his comments on talkback radio and called for his removal.

"moderate" front in the run-up to its \$1 million television advertising blitz.

## WHERE'S THE ACTION?

ON 2 September 1994, CTU president Ken Douglas advocated a combined trade union campaign to fight for big pay rises.

He said unions should break the law if necessary to obtain the contracts they want.

But no observable practical steps have yet been taken by the head of the Council of Trade Unions to mobilise workers around a united pay campaign.

Dating from his speech, there's still

**no action  
from Ken after  
200 days**

# Day of confrontation swings truckies behind picket

## BULLER

After a series of tense confrontations on March 21 between the police and picketing mill workers trying to stop rimu logs leaving their district, logging truck drivers refused to cross the picket again.

The truckies had taken logs out under heavy police protection on a day when trees were felled to block the road, picketers formed human barricades in front of the lorries, cops engaged in torrid shoving matches with them, one protester was knocked out during a skirmish and another three were arrested.

The decision of the drivers to respect the road blockade at Little Totara Forest was greeted as a "major victory" by Buller millworkers fighting to save their jobs.

Coal miners and cement workers were gearing up to "black" the truckies and their companies, but this action was dropped after the drivers promised not to cross the picket again.

## Angry

The millworkers are angry that Timberlands West Coast, a state-owned enterprise, has awarded the rimu contract to a sawmill outside the region. They say this breaches a 1986 government accord supposed to maintain a viable sawmilling industry in Buller until 2006.

Their picket had been in place for five weeks when the events of March 21 escalated the dispute in dramatic fashion.

The first confrontation came at 6am when four logging trucks arrived at the road blockade. Picketers spoke to the drivers, who refused to cross the picket.

The trucks parked a short distance away while Westport police called in reinforcements from Greymouth and Reefton. More protesters arrived to swell the picket to 40.

Police in a wedge formation pushed and dragged protesters off the access road.



WESTPORT POLICE sergeant pulls Buller picketer from the bull bars of a logging truck, March 21

The blockade reformed further down the road and police again cleared it. The logging trucks drove through to angry cries of "scab".

A kilometre along the 15km logging road the trucks were stopped again by a tree felled across the road. Timberlands staff and police removed it, but there were more trees felled a few hundred metres further on.

Similar blockages littered the road to the log site.

The logging trucks began to exit the forest at 3.30pm. They were confronted by 30 picketers. The cops got stuck into them in a big way.

Millworkers spokesperson Pete Doncliff said

the 16 policemen were more confident than they'd been in the morning because there were no media present.

"They came straight in, hard and fast, and were really quite violent," he reported.

Westport resident Anne Cutting was knocked out as she tried to help another protester who was backing away from rough treatment by a cop.

Cutting later recounted the incident: "I was trying to say 'don't be so rough'. The constable twisted around and caught me in the stomach with his elbows. I was sent flying. It was rough. It

was bloody frightening. There was no need for that amount of violence."

West Coast police commander, superintendent Jim Wright, said protesters who refuse to move when asked are breaking the law and must expect force to be used against them.

He threatened to escalate the level of force that police used against the picketers. "I think the kid glove stuff will have to be looked at. They have been given ample opportunity."

But the police are hampered by the massive support the picketers are getting from local workers, residents and small business people.

A besieged Timberlands said on March 23 that it would delay its next shipment of timber from Little Totara Forest to "allow some time for tempers to cool".

The Buller picketers are determined to continue the protest until they win.

In a significant development, a second West Coast picket line is being planned by workers at Whataroa. Their jobs are also threatened by Timberlands awarding rimu cutting rights to an outside company.

"We plan to do the same as they are in Buller - camping out and blocking the road to try and stop them shipping the logs out," said Whataroa protest organiser Gary Aburn.

## Meat workers vote to strike

### NORTH ISLAND

As we go to press, 2,000 meat workers in 10 Affco plants are due to strike for two days following the breakdown of pay talks.

The strike ballot was supported by 79 per cent of the workers, who haven't had a pay rise in five years.

Affco is offering an across-the-board increase of 17 cents an hour, which the Meat Union says is equivalent to 1 per cent.

The union wants a minimum wage of \$10 an hour with a restoration of shift allowances and overtime.

Officials predict more strikes if Affco fails to repay staff for their sacrifices.

Union spokesperson Roger Middlemass said the union had agreed to drastic restructuring in 1993 to save Affco from insolvency. In return, the company had agreed to "partnership with the union".

The company hasn't kept its side of the bargain. It has interpreted co-operation to mean compliance.

Middlemass said that Affco sees itself as "the senior partner" in the partnership and the union as "the silent partner".

## Wharf walkout

### AUCKLAND

Watersiders went on a week-long strike to oppose casualisation.

87 permanent workers employed by Waitemata Stevedoring walked out over the company's plans to use "seagulls" (casuals) for a greater range of tasks at much lower labour costs.

Their picket was supported by seafarers and other unionists. Drivers carrying loads for their firm respected the picket.

This is the first big dispute on the wharves since the Labour government's restructuring in 1989 which slashed the workforce in half.

Waitemata is being backed by other stevedoring companies who want to lock in the profitable clawbacks of 1989.

The workers went back on March 27 as talks resumed with the company. There was no result as we went to press.

## PAYBACK TIME FOR RAILWORKERS

### NATIONWIDE

It's payback time after ten years of crap from Rail management.

That was the prevailing attitude among 2,500 rail workers who walked off the job for 24 hours on March 29. They belong to CURE, the union representing train drivers, tradespeople and office staff.

Over the last decade, Rail staff have been slashed 500 per cent while pay has been held down.

CURE is going for a 3 per cent wage increase and a 5 per cent productivity bonus, as well as raising new staff to the same conditions as longterm staff in order to end what railworkers call "industrial apartheid".

The bosses are offering 1.5 per cent, tagged with clawbacks.

Management walked away from talks before Christmas and didn't contact the union

until after the strike ballot. All the way through, Rail has adopted a "hardball" attitude.

Apart from two trains run by management in a media gesture, all freight tonnage was halted on the day of the strike, along with all passenger services.

This was the first national rail strike since 1967.

Reports from CURE pickets around the country suggest widespread public sympathy for the railworkers.

Most CURE members appear determined to pursue their claims. The favoured rank-and-file option seems to be rolling stoppages, which will cause maximum disruption with minimum loss of wages.

"Morale is the highest it's been in five years," reported one driver.



# Moutoa occupiers force council backdown

by BARRY LEE

AN IMPORTANT milestone was reached by Whanganui Maori when they successfully defied a council ultimatum to vacate Moutoa Gardens by March 30.

There was a heavy inference that force would be used to remove them if they didn't obey the council.

As the deadline neared, their ranks swelled from several hundred to over 1,500.

Faced with this mass challenge, the council backed down at the last minute and applied to the High Court for a ruling on ownership of the gardens.

The council, police and media have tried hard to discredit the occupiers. Businessman mayor Chas Poynter criticised "Maori activists", a police chief slammed "radicals, criminals and gang members" and talkback hosts yearned for a "Pakeha backlash".



Haka at Pakaitore Marae (Moutoa Gardens)

But the forces of "law and order" had to beat a tactical retreat as the occupation generated growing support for the rebirth of Pakaitore Marae and exposed 150 years of land grabs and treaty lies.

The occupation has become a powerful symbol of the resurgence of flax roots Maori.

This mass action has done more to reverse the alienation of Whanganui tribal land than years of talk.

## Alienation of Whanganui land

THE HISTORY of the alienation of land from Whanganui Maori is a history of conflict, pressure and manipulation.

That's not surprising, since the British came to Aotearoa with the intention of colonising a land that was already occupied, just like they did in Ireland, Africa, Asia, America and other parts of the Pacific.

In 1838 the NZ Company signed a deed with three "chiefs" for a large purchase of the Whanganui area. There was plenty of doubt that they had any authority to sell.

An attempt was later made to confirm the deed, but many Maori owners were not paid, some didn't agree to sell and some were not even present when the "sale" was made and £700 in goods handed over.

Even NZ Company boss Edward Wakefield later admitted that the Maori "wanted to return the goods to me, but I steadfastly refused, and told them a bargain was concluded."

An inquiry into land deals by William Spain resulted in another £1,000 being offered in 1844 to Whanganui Maori, but they refused to accept it.

Spain declared that the company should be awarded 40,000 acres of land, but in fact it surveyed off 90,000 acres and laid claim to that area.

In 1845 the army took some land for a parade ground.

What happened since then is yet to be exactly established, but the oral history of Whanganui Maori insists the land was not sold.

## Government promotes Maori elite

by BARRY LEE

WITH ITS fiscal envelope in tatters, the government is looking for new ways to put the lid on Maori land claims.

Treaty minister Doug Graham is now promoting the formation of a top-level treaty group involving Maori and government.

The aim is to draw a handful of influential Maori into a land deal, just like the Sealord deal relied on a small bunch of Maori "corporate warriors" to legally extin-

guish Maori fishing claims.

The government wants a settlement that creates a class of wealthy Maori with a vested interest in the system who can act as a buffer between big business and the vast majority of working class Maori.

Already this Maori elite is becoming known as the "Brownstable" - the brown-skinned Roundtable.

Workers of all races have a common enemy, the employers of all races who exploit them for profits.

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## HE PANUI

Anei te karanga a Niko Tangaroa, tetahi o nga rangatira o Pakaitore.

Kia tautoko tonu matau i te raupatu.

Werohia tonu ki te kawanatanga i tenei wa.

## Moutoa "vital to Maoridom", says occupation leader

NIKO TANGAROA, a leader of Pakaitore Marae, spoke to **Socialist Worker** the day after the expiry of Whanganui council's deadline for ending the Moutoa Gardens occupation.

"1,500 people were here yesterday supporting us," reported Niko. "There has been wonderful support, especially from the Pakeha community in Wanganui."

A number of unions and churches have sent messages of solidarity.

Niko described the atmosphere at Pakaitore Marae as "calm" and "relaxed".

The Whanganui struggle is "vital to Maoridom", he said, because in addition to being a land claim

it's also "talking about sovereignty".

It would help Maoridom erect "a framework to deal with the crown".

"We want a peaceful resolution," he stated, "but at the moment the crown isn't coming to the party."

Niko pointed to the plight of so many Maori: "No proper housing, on the dole, filling up the prisons."

The National government is following in the footsteps of "the betrayal of Rogernomics".

Niko asked **Socialist Worker** to broadcast an appeal for two things: firstly, "continued support from around the country", and secondly, "more pressure on the government".